

DISPATCH NO. 1007

SECRET

CLASSIFICATION

TO : Chief, Foreign Division W

DATE: 20 AUGUST 1950

FROM : Chief, Foreign Division W
SUBJECT: Operational/Redbird

1. Hugo [REDACTED]
2. Janis [REDACTED]

1. RUSA-1257 of 16 December 1949
2. RUSA-1259 of 14 June 1950
3. RUSA-11428 of 4 August 1950
4. RUS-650 of 8 August 1950

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1. LUKINS was interviewed on 8 August 1950 for clarification of the situation described in references 2 and 3. For the information of Harbord, LUKINS was interviewed for the first time in December, 1949, when the information contained in reference 1 was forwarded to Washington. At that time LUKINS stated that he headed a group of about 300 Latvians in Sweden who were both to maintain contact with Latvia and to influence political developments among the exiles in Sweden. There is no formal group with elective officers and regular meetings, and work is carried out on an individual basis. LUKINS has contact with other Latvian groups in Sweden, but does not inform them of any operational plans or attempt to obtain from them any financial support for his activities. This lack of closeness is partly prompted by fear of security breaches and partly by differing internal political views. LUKINS has had some operational experience and was in charge of an unsuccessful December, 1946 attempt to land five Latvians and one Russian in Latvia. Bad weather forced their boat into Gotland, where they were arrested by Swedish authorities, and a later investigation showed that the group had almost definitely been aided by the British. So far as we know, this is the only actual operation in which LUKINS has engaged, though he knows of other Latvian attempts to penetrate the Baltic countries. In October, 1948, LUKINS made contact with VIDAR [REDACTED] in Sweden, and arranged a line into the Swedish operation which ultimately placed SVEN [REDACTED] in Latvia. The LUKINS group presently maintains contact with SVEN. SVEN does not write to a Nordic M. A. [REDACTED] in Narva, a town near Coteborg. LUKINS no longer receives letters from SVEN personally, but he knows the contents of the occasional letters, which he describes as general in nature, and more important as means of maintaining contact than as sources of intelligence. In our December interview, LUKINS explained that the letters were sent to cover names in Latvia and Sweden, and included cover terms which permitted some reading between the lines; he said that letters had sometimes been sent to "V. J. [REDACTED]" in Stockholm. The

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LUKINS group also once maintained radio contact with Latvia, using a radio which was confiscated by the Swedish authorities on 10 July 1948. When GUNTER returned to Latvia he had with him a receiving set for radio which he and the LUKINS group had worked out for future use. GUNTER said that such contact has been little used, since he has only a receiver at his disposal, and since transmitters from Sweden are difficult to find. He feels that the radio set which was confiscated by the police in July, 1948 may be identical with the one which GUNTER says was taken from his friend in the fall of 1949, and thinks that GUNTER is possibly in connection with an operation in which he was never personally involved. It is also apparent that neither can know that GUNTER has a transmitter and is sending messages at the present time, probably indicating that LUKINS and GUNTER are not fully aware of all developments in the Tiltstone complex. He thinks that it is possible that at the present time we are obtaining the information which GUNTER claims he could produce through our Tiltstone connections.

2. Concerning GUNTER, LUKINS says that so far as he knows, GUNTER cannot be termed Swedish representative of the Latvian partisan groups, and that he does not represent any special group of Latvian refugees in Sweden. He is probably acting out of a combination of patriotism and self-interest, in order to show local Latvians, some of whom dislike him for purely personal reasons, that he is able to interest American authorities in a venture of this sort. GUNTER has never worked in any past operation to send people to Latvia, so far as LUKINS knows, and served in the unsuccessful December, 1946 operation only as a "third class courier". He feels that LUKINS' comments are not prompted by jealousy of GUNTER, but by what he feels is an honest appraisal of GUNTER's past activities. LUKINS says that he personally is friendly toward GUNTER and his family. Other Latvian sources have described GUNTER as "energetic, discreet, and an extreme rightist, who possibly did not cooperate with the German occupying forces in Latvia", and as a capable individual who has more limited contact among Latvian circles than LUKINS. At the present time GUNTER is working for an import-export firm, and is honorary secretary of the Latvian YMCA in Stockholm. LUKINS knew that he had contacted "highly placed Americans" in Hamburg, and thought that he had or would return to Hamburg sometime this week for further discussions.
3. In our discussions, LUKINS once more stressed that neither he nor any other Latvian whom he knows, can organize a trip or contact without adequate funds. He reiterated that his experience has shown him the futility of action without such support, and became very frank in his comments, pointing out how long the Americans had discussed Baltic operations without taking action, stressing that each month gone by decreases chances of success of such ventures, and adding that morale among refugee circles was sinking so that it was difficult to keep a core of willing and experienced personnel available for operations. He said that complications such as the introduction of GUNTER into the over-all picture confused the matter as well as making it

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less secure. Nevertheless, his attitude was still that of December, 1949, when he said that if there were to be an effectively organized boat trip, all goods and money would have to be supplied, and that first class equipment and well-trained crews were prerequisites of success. At that time he said that he saw no reason for making his organization seem more important than it was, since the matter must be faced realistically; he said that he was unwilling to be a beggar in order to obtain aid, and added that he had refused to cooperate with the General Staff because of what he termed "impossible demands".

4. At the present time LUKINS keeps a radio transmitter-receiver in his room. He said that about two months ago he was contacted by the Swedish police in connection with an espionage case involving the Foreigners Commission, and at that time the police told him that they would not interfere if he began transmitting to Latvia, but that if they were ordered to take action, they would let him know in advance. We feel that this statement must be taken with some reservation in light of the past activities of the police in such matters. However, in view of LUKINS' past experience in Latvian operations, his position as head of a Latvian group, and because of his strong personality, it may be well to plan any operation around him, at least until such time as a more accurate appraisal of LUKINS' potentialities can be made. When questioned if he would be available for discussions in Germany, LUKINS explained that his position with the American Overseas Airlines in Stockholm gave him free Saturdays, and that he could arrange a free flight to Hamburg almost any weekend, provided he could plan the trip several weeks in advance.
5. At the earliest opportunity we will interview GRIMES concerning his part of this story, in order to more completely round out the Tilstone picture and his particular aspect of Baltic operations. We will make contact with him in the manner described in LHM-A-4899 of 28 March 1950, forwarded as an attachment to WSSN-1249.

Comments

For the information of representatives in Germany who are approached/ from Sweden, we believe the following comments are pertinent:

As a commentary on the attitude of LUKINS, which is to some extent shared by other Baltic leaders in Sweden, the former stated, "You only give second class equipment and money while we are giving our blood." He meant in addition that we gave a limited amount of money which would not be sufficient to properly maintain or support an operation.

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There are, however, circumstances toward our control which cannot be given information that can be given to enemy operations in the area. It is also clear that it is not possible to organize an operation in the area of the local authorities. This is particularly true in view of the limited support available to any of these groups has resulted in their approaching other nationalist elements in order to collect necessary funds. We do not believe, however, that even though we completely understand all financial aspects of a mission, furnished complete equipment, including a boat, and put all personnel on a cash basis at payroll prior to the operation, that the project could be kept from the knowledge of the Swedish police. The problems of procuring supplies and gasoline, obtaining docking facilities, etc., make it practically impossible to completely cloak such a venture.

Our local liaison has in the past refused to allow us to carry on such activities. They state that their control over the police and the other security agencies such as the coast guard is not adequate to completely protect such a venture unless it is being run and controlled by local elements. They also point out that the Swedish neutrality policy is such that almost any project might stage a similar project under their control they could not engage in a joint project with a Western Power. We know that this policy has been violated on at least two occasions, but it appears that these violations were as matters of expediency in projects in which the Swedes were directly committed to a point where they could not logically withdraw. We are of the opinion that Headquarters is reluctant to commit any substantial sum of money in a project that we do not control. It therefore appears that unless an appropriate vessel and equipment can be furnished by Germany to carry out operations to the area, any planning based upon the ability or desire on the part of the Swedes in Sweden to take part in an American-controlled operation is unlikely.

Even though the Swedes were willing to cooperate on a basis acceptable to us, the insurmountable fact is this - that the Swedes do not have a satisfactory boat to make the crossing. The only boat now available is in the possession of the Estonians, and it has been proven to be highly unreliable, is not equipped with radar, and has a top optimum speed of about 23 knots. The use of such equipment makes the venture not only foolhardy but almost suicidal. All known groups are almost completely without any physical or financial assets and must be completely supported by us.

We regret that we are not able to obtain the necessary operational intelligence in this area but we are faced with conditions as they do exist. We will be more than glad to contact any persons in this area who are considered operationally desirable for use from Germany but we do feel that any planning that is done must take into consideration the above comments.

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